

Message Text

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15

ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00

INRE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-05 L-02 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 EB-04 AID-05 SAM-01 OMB-01 /058 W

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FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0203

INFO SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE

CINCPAC HONOLULU IMMEDIATE

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STATE PASS USIA FOR IBS/NCA

E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: MOPS VS CH

SUBJ: UPI STORY ON CHINESE TRAWLERS NEAR PECTEN

OIL RIG AND SVN REACTION THERETO

1. UPI STORY OF NOV 9, CARRIED IN BANNER HEADLINES IN SAIGON POST, REPORTS THAT SOUTH VIET-NAM HAS RUSHED A FLOTILLA OF WARSHIPS TO AN AMERICAN-OWNED (PECTEN) OFFSHORE DRILLING RIG 200 MILES SOUTH OF VUNG TAU WHICH WAS UNDER INTENSE OBSERVATION BY COMMUNIST CHINESE TRAWLERS. ASCRIBING STORY TO GVN MILITARY SOURCES, THE UPI ITEM SAID THE TRAWLERS WERE ASSUMED TO BE DISGUISED SURVEILLANCE CRAFT AND QUOTED SENIOR VIETNAMESE NAVAL OFFICERS AS DESCRIBING THE SITUATION AS VERY TENSE. WE UNDERSTAND THAT ABC AND NBC ALSO CARRIED THE STORY IN NEWSCASTS FROM SAIGON.

2. OUR INVESTIGATION, WHICH INCLUDED CHECKS WITH THE DIRECTOR OF VIETNAMESE NAVAL INTELLIGENCE AND PECTEN, DISCLOSED THAT THERE MAY HAVE BEEN CHINESE TRAWLERS IN THE GENERAL AREA OF THE RIG, BUT NONE OF THEM PASSED CLOSER THAN FOUR MILES OF IT. FURTHERMORE, THE PRESENCE OF SUCH TRAWLERS IS HARDLY UNCOMMON IN THAT PART OF
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THE CHINA SEA. AS TO THE REPORT THAT THE NAVY HAD DISPATCHED

ADDITIONAL WARSHIPS TO THE RIG SITE, THIS IS NOT TRUE. IN THE TWO GENERAL AREAS WHERE DRILLING IS IN PROGRESS, GLOMAR 4 (9 DEGREES 46 MINUTES NORTH BY 108 DEGREES 00 MINUTES EAST) AND PROSPECTOR (8 DEGREES 38 MINUTES NORTH BY 108 DEGREES 55 MINUTES EAST), THE VIETNAMESE NAVY MAINTAINS TWO SHIPS, HQ 613 (PGM) AND HQ 04 (DER), RESPECTIVELY. THESE SHIPS HAVE BEEN THERE FOR SEVERAL WEEKS. NO REINFORCEMENTS HAVE BEEN SENT. THIS VERSION HAS BEEN CORROBORATED BY PECTEN OFFICIALS WHO, ALARMED AT NEWS STORY, FLEW OUT TO THE RIG OVER THE WEEK-END AND SAW NOTHING UNUSUAL.

3. THE GVN PRESS SPOKESMAN TODAY DENIED THAT SOUTH VIETNAMESE NAVAL CRAFT HAD BEEN SENT TO THE AREA AROUND THE PECTEN DRILLING SITE AND SAID THAT HE HAD NO CONFIRMED REPORTS OF ANY CHINESE FISHING TRAWLERS BEING SIGHTED NEARBY.

4. IT IS WORTHY OF NOTE THAT AP, REUTERS, AND AFP THOUGHT THE STORY TOO FLIMSY TO CARRY.
MARTIN

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